DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 367 855 CE 065 927

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TITLE Emerging Partnerships: Safer Communities, Transformed Offenders, Shared Educational Resources.
PUB DATE Nov 93
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (Dallas, TX, November 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Basic Education; Adult Literacy; *Adult Programs; *Cooperative Programs; *Coordination; Correctional Education; Correctional Institutions; *Correctional Rehabilitation; *Educational Cooperation; Literacy Education; Probationary Period; Program Development; Program Implementation; State Legislation; State Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Texas

ABSTRACT

Applying the philosophy that strategic partnerships are the most effective way to share knowledge, skills, and resources, emerging community corrections adult education programs and existing community adult education service providers have begun to forge critical linkages. In Texas, the law now requires assessment of the educational level of all probationers and parolees to be followed by referrals to education programs for those whose literacy level is below the sixth-grade level. The following elements in Henderson's (1990) partnership framework can be applied to the development of cooperative efforts between community corrections adult education programs and traditional adult education programs: mutual benefits, trust, sharing knowledge and unique resources, and linkage-operational guidelines. Successful programs in Texas are as follows: Adult Education Co-ops; programs operated by the Private Industry Council, Job Training Partnership Act, and Council of Governments; community college programs; and independent school district programs. The majority of the programs are being used in rural areas. Rural communities can expand the number of educational services offered to the community by combining resources through cooperative efforts. Sources of volunteers who can be the backbone of an education program are senior citizen organizations, churches, community service groups, and private organizations. Local literacy programs provide one-on-one tutoring by trained volunteers. (YLB)

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**Presented at the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education**
**1993 Annual Adult Education Conference, Dallas, Texas**

ED 367 855

# EMERGING PARTNERSHIPS: Safer Communities, Transformed Offenders, Shared Educational Resources

## Building a Partnership Framework Between Emerging Community Corrections (Probation and Parole) Adult Education Programs and Existing Adult Education Service Providers

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A project recently commissioned by IBM and conducted by researcher John Henderson ("Plugging into Strategic Partnerships" Sloan Management Review, Spring 1990) reinforced the concept that strategic partnerships are the most effective way to share knowledge, skills, and resources. The resulting linkages are mutually beneficial to the partners and to the customers/clients. Benefits include shared financial investments, innovations, and risks. Further, all partners become committed to shared visions and goals, and the building of trust.

Applying this philosophy, emerging community corrections adult education programs and existing community adult education service providers have begun to forge critical linkages for partnerships.

Community corrections adult education programs encompass literacy, Adult Basic Education, GED preparation, English as a Second Language, and Life Skills instruction. Community corrections clients are individuals who are being supervised on probation or parole and who have been charged with a misdemeanor and/or felony offense but are not incarcerated in jail or prison.

In Texas, a literal revolution in adult education services delivery took place about three years ago due to changes mandated by the Texas Legislature. The law now requires assessment of the educational level of all probationers and parolees to be followed by referrals to education programs for those whose literacy level is below the sixth grade level. Existing programs in the traditional adult education community lacked the capacity and funds to absorb the resulting volume of referrals from probation and parole. In some instances, there was concern over the large number of seemingly less motivated probationer/parole-students being referred for services due to the change in the law.

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In fiscal year 1992, 488,101 adults were being supervised by probation departments in Texas. Research has shown that individuals with lower educational levels are overly represented in the criminal justice system. For example, the adult probation department in Austin, Texas, tested all new probationers and more than one-third scored below the 12th grade/GED level and approximately ten percent scored below the sixth grade level. In addition to those who are mandated by law to attend a literacy program, the courts are beginning to order those who lack a high school diploma/GED or do not speak English into adult education programs. The existing adult education system does not have sufficient funding for this volume of adult students. Therefore, community corrections adult education efforts are primarily funded and directed by adult probation departments using state criminal justice subsidies. Existing traditional adult education providers include literacy councils, independent school districts, libraries, Texas Education Agency cooperatives, and community colleges. In some instances joint programs combine traditional adult education providers, Job Training Partnership Act programs, and community corrections adult education programs.

There are nearly eighty adult probation education programs in Texas which are generally located in or adjacent to the probation department. Many are automated for computer-aided instruction (CAI) and according to education program coordinators this has proven to be a very strong retention, motivation, and completion tool.

**Why Form Partnerships in Community Corrections Adult Education?**

Shortly after the educational mandates went into effect traditional adult education programs and community corrections adult education programs realized that they had mutual visions and goals. Some of these were set by the legislation and some reflected emerging community needs. The elements in Henderson's partnership framework can be applied to the development of cooperative efforts between community corrections adult education programs and traditional adult education programs.

"Mutual Benefits"

Strong leadership was necessary to identify and include all stakeholders and to convince them that a partnership would be mutually beneficial. Non-duplication of services was clearly the most beneficial and cost effective result of a partnership. Although each partner had different eligibility requirements it was found that they had the same or similar student/client base. The leader contacted each prospective partner on an individual basis in order to obtain their commitment to a partnership framework. The leader then encouraged a sharing of resources and responsibilities among the partners in the development of a in-kind non-financial agreement. An in-kind non-financial agreement outlines each partner's contribution to the project, joint and singular responsibilities, and a description of the shared student/client base.

"Trust"

An important element of a partnership agreement is the establishment of trust among the partners. In successful partnerships the leaders cultivate trust and a belief that each partner will honor the cooperative spirit of the agreement. The assumption must be made that a partnership

will accomplish the shared vision and goal of a "community" adult education program. In a successful cooperative agreement each partner shares responsibility for the creation of a trusting "learning environment" for probationers and other student/clients.

"Sharing Knowledge and Unique Resources"

A successful partnership enables each partner to benefit from the combined knowledge, unique skills, and resources of the group. The community itself receives a greater benefit from the combined effort than if each entity operated independently.

"Linkage-Operational Guidelines"

The partnership agreement defines procedural guidelines for the day-to-day and long-term operation of the cooperative effort. It further defines legal responsibilities of the partners to each other and the student/client.

## TEXAS MODELS

Texas is a rural, urban, multi-cultural state. These factors have an enormous impact upon any type of service program implemented within the state. Each area of Texas has its own individual characteristics in regard to resources, population numbers and ethnicity, and area size. Successful programs must take these factors into consideration in the development of a program that will address an area's specific student needs.

The examples and suggestions given in this section have been gathered from successful education programs within the state.

### CO-OPERATIVE PROGRAMS

Community Supervision & Corrections Departments (CSCDs-formerly identified as Adult Probation Departments) can greatly enhance their education programs by enlisting existing agencies in co-operative efforts. Co-operative programs expand the services that can be offered to students. The expanded services might include, at no cost to the department, the use of certified teachers, expansion of the program from basic literacy to include GED preparation, additional teaching supplies, and inclusion of friends, relatives, and co-workers of the CSCD clients who are in need of adult education services.

Adult Education Co-ops

Each Adult Education Co-op (Co-op) is responsible for eight to ten counties within the state and receives funding through the Texas Education Agency. The Co-ops, depending upon the programs in their service area, will provide teaching materials and pay a certified teacher to conduct classes. The Co-op in each area will provide details concerning its services and resources available. The Co-op pays the teacher directly and withholds all taxes, social security, and teacher retirement. Each Co-op administers its

program independently except for general state and federal requirements and guidelines. The Co-ops may be funding an existing adult education program in the community and may choose to expand that program to include Community Supervision clients or may add additional classes at a CSCD's education program site.

Example: The Bastrop CSCD is working with the Co-op in two of its four counties. In one county the Co-op pays a certified teacher to conduct evening classes and provides teaching materials. In the other county, which has small student numbers, the Co-op provides teaching materials only.

Private Industry Council (PIC),
Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and Council of Governments (COG)

JTPA is a Federally-funded job and training program with very strict federal guidelines in regards to the clients who can be served, HOWEVER, a large number of Community Supervision clients will qualify for the program. JTPA programs are administered under PIC, COG, or related governmental agencies throughout Texas.

In-kind non-financial agreements can be made for exchanges of services between CSCD departments, JTPA, PIC, and/or COG which enable all entities to expand their service base.

Example: The Bastrop CSCD entered into an agreement with the PIC/JTPA office in Bastrop.

(1) The PIC/JTPA has classroom space, teachers, and instructional materials.

(2) The Bastrop CSCD has some clients who qualify for JTPA services and a computer based education program.
(3) The Bastrop CSCD moved its education computers and programs to the PIC/JTPA site.

(4) With the increase in students, the Education Co-op agreed to pay a certified teacher to conduct evening classes two nights a week and to provide teaching materials.

IN-KIND NON-FINANCIAL TRADE OFF:

The PIC/JTPA has increased the number of clients in their program with the referrals from Bastrop CSCD; the Bastrop CSCD computers increased the use of computer based educational programs at the PIC/JTPA site; and evening classes are available for probation/parole students, JTPA clients and relatives, friends and co-workers. Bastrop CSCD students do not need to qualify for JTPA to attend the day classes; all department education classes are held at the PIC/JTPA classrooms which are located in a very convenient area for the students.

Community Colleges

Community colleges often provide adult education classes and Community Correction clients are eligible for these classes. If there is a community college close by, it may be interested in beginning an additional adult education program in the area. Vocational classes may also be offered which would benefit the community as a whole.

Example: When the Bastrop CSCD and PIC/JTPA combined efforts, Austin Community College joined the in-kind non-financial agreement. The college began conducting vocational classes three nights a week at the PIC/JTPA classrooms and provided additional computers, computer educational programs, and a vocational teacher. The students of the vocational classes do have to pay for the class, however, the cost is less than if the student had to commute to Austin to attend class. The JTPA program pays for JTPA clients and the students can also apply for PELL grants. The college gained the use of the computers and computer programs provided by Bastrop CSCD and PIC/JTPA.

Independent School Districts

Independent School Districts also provide adult education classes. Most of these classes are staffed by teachers paid by the Adult Education Co-ops. Community Supervision clients are eligible for these programs. In some instances co-operative agreements can be made.

Example: The Bastrop CSCD and the Giddings Middle School entered into an agreement for the CSCD education computers and programs to be moved to the ESL classroom on the school campus. The ESL teacher uses the computers and programs for the ESL students who are at-risk students (late teens/early twenties) during the day. After school the classroom is available for clients from the CSCD and community residents. Currently the ESL teacher conducts these classes and is paid by the CSCD due to the small client base. The Adult Education Co-op provides teaching materials and at a later date may be in a position to pay some or all of the teacher's salary.

## SUMMARY/RURAL VS URBAN

The majority of the above programs are being utilized in rural areas although the urban departments use some of the above resources. Rural areas are limited in the number and kind of resources available with the additional problem of having few clients in a large geographical area. By combining resources through co-operative efforts the rural communities can expand the number of educational services offered to the community. Transportation is a major problem in the rural areas and a workable solution has not been found.

Urban departments enjoy the benefits of metropolitan areas which include bus service, availability of resources, and a large student population. Most of the urban departments have in-house educational programs.

## SHARED RESOURCES

### Volunteers

Volunteers can be the backbone of an education program. Volunteer sources include senior citizen organizations, churches, community service groups, and private organizations. Volunteers can be used as tutors, to provide clerical support, and for phone duties. The use of volunteers is only limited by the needs of the program and the talents of the individual volunteer.

Community Supervision and Correction clients with at least a high school educational level can be used as tutors and in some instances can receive credit for Community Service Restitution (CSR) hours (volunteer service hours mandated by the courts).

Example: The Bastrop CSCD Education Program will be using a volunteer with computer skills to assist in the development of a statistical program to be used in tracking data for the four county education program.

Bastrop CSCD clients who have at least a high school educational level serve as tutors in the Education Program and are given credit for required CSR hours.

### Literacy Programs

The local literacy programs provide one-on-one tutoring by trained volunteers. The Laubach and Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) are just two of the established groups in Texas. The services of these groups are either free or charge a small fee for supplies. In the case of hardship most of the groups have funds to off-set the fee.

Example: The Hutchinson County CSCD is an affiliate of LVA for the department's basic literacy program and use trained volunteer tutors.

The Bastrop CSCD uses the Elgin Literacy Council to provide one-on-one tutoring for probationers and for residents at the Restitution Center in Elgin, Texas.

The Bastrop Literacy Council provides one-on-one tutoring for a limited number of CSCD clients in Bastrop, Texas.

### Additional Resources

The Literacy Council Directory is available from the Texas Literacy Council, Texas Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 12728, Austin, Texas 78711, or call **1-800-441-READ**.

Texas A&M University is now the site of the new Texas Literacy Resource Center. A wealth of curriculums and staff development information is available by telephoning (409) 845-6615.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to acknowledge Linda Lesso for her assistance with editing and proofreading.

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